

The Board of Supervisors

County Administration Building
1025 Escobar St., 4th floor
Martinez, California 94553

John Gioia, 1st District
Candace Andersen, 2nd District
Diane Burgis, 3rd District
Ken Carlson, 4th District
Shanelle Scales-Preston, 5th District

Contra Costa County



Monica Nino
Clerk of the Board
and
County Administrator
(925) 655-2075

May 2, 2025

Honorable Maria Elena Durazo, Chair
Senate Local Government Committee
State Capitol, Room 407
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Aisha Wahab, Chair
Senate Housing Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3330
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 306 (Schultz) – Building regulations: state building standards – OPPOSE – As Amended March 19, 2025

Dear Chair Durazo and Chair Wahab:

On behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully oppose Assembly Bill 306, authored by Assemblymember Schultz. We share your commitment to addressing California's housing crisis and reducing the high cost of living for residents across the state. However, AB 306, as currently drafted, does not support housing production or affordability. Instead, it places a blanket moratorium on new state and local building code updates, undermining essential progress on housing safety, energy efficiency, cost-saving innovation, and climate resilience.

The California Building Code (CBC) is a critical framework for ensuring that buildings in our state are safe, accessible, energy-efficient, and environmentally sustainable. Suspending updates to the CBC for six years would hinder the ability of both state and local jurisdictions to adopt building standards that reflect advances in construction, materials, and energy technology. It would also block the incorporation of cost-saving tools and design standards that benefit homeowners, renters, and developers alike.

While AB 306 is presented as a housing cost reduction measure, building code compliance accounts for only a small portion of overall construction expenses. In fact, many of the factors contributing to high housing costs—such as land prices, labor shortages, financing challenges, and regulatory delays—are not addressed by this bill. Moreover, there is no evidence provided that freezing building codes would accelerate housing production or reduce development costs in any meaningful way.

In contrast, regular updates to state and local building codes often introduce efficiencies that help reduce long-term construction and operational costs. For example, local reach codes that support the adoption of all-electric building systems and high-efficiency appliances have been shown to cut construction costs by up to \$10,000 per unit and generate substantial savings in energy bills.

over time. According to historical estimates, energy code improvements have saved Californians more than \$100 billion in avoided energy costs over the past 50 years.

Beyond economic considerations, AB 306 would directly conflict with California's climate goals. The state's commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2045—established under AB 1279 (2022) and detailed in the 2022 Scoping Plan—relies heavily on the continued advancement of building standards. Local governments also play a vital role in meeting these goals by adopting local amendments that address unique environmental and climate risks. In Contra Costa County, our Climate Action and Adaptation Plan depends on the ability to exceed statewide building standards where necessary to reduce emissions and prepare for future climate impacts. AB 306 would severely limit our capacity to do so.

Additionally, this bill would delay the implementation of emerging safety technologies that protect life and property. For instance, future updates to the National Electrical Code are expected to reduce the need for costly electrical panel upgrades—an improvement that would benefit homeowners and reduce construction delays. Freezing code updates would prevent these types of innovations from being adopted and implemented, thereby raising costs and creating new risks.

Importantly, the existing triennial code update cycle is a robust and deliberative process that allows for public input, technical review, and careful consideration of economic and environmental impacts. Suspending this process would eliminate a key avenue for introducing thoughtful, incremental improvements that keep pace with technological change.

In summary, AB 306 does not advance the goal of improving housing affordability and instead imposes unnecessary restrictions on innovation, public safety, energy efficiency, and local climate action. Unfortunately, the bill creates more barriers than solutions, and would ultimately make housing more expensive, less safe, and less sustainable. For these reasons, the County of Contra Costa respectfully opposes this bill, and remains eager to collaborate on solutions that support housing development while maintaining critical building code improvements that benefit all Californians.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Jami Morritt, Chief Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
John Kopchick, Director of Conservation and Development
Members, Senate Housing Committee
Members, Senate Local Government Committee
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer

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May 13, 2025

The Honorable Avelino Valencia
Chair, Assembly Banking & Finance Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 5510
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 871 (Stefani) – Mandated reporters of suspected financial abuse of an elder or dependent adult. – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Valencia:

On behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully request your support for AB 871, authored by Assembly Member Stefani. This bill expands the required training for employees of financial institutions who are mandated reporters of elder and dependent adult financial abuse.

California is home to nearly 6 million seniors – more than any other state in the nation. The state's population of adults aged 65 and older is projected to reach 25 percent of the population, or 8.6 million Californians, by 2030. Each year, millions of older adults fall victim to telephone and internet-based fraud and financial scams. County Adult Protective Service (APS) agencies are on the front lines of combatting elder financial abuse and exploitation, of which 36 percent of APS reports are due to financial abuse.

The FBI reports that over \$3 billion was lost in elder fraud scams in 2023 nationwide. This only covers reported crime, so the actual losses may be much higher. Since 2000, the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) has received complaints about internet-facilitated crimes, including online fraud and other cybercrimes. The IC3 provides the public with a convenient reporting system to submit information to the FBI concerning suspected internet-facilitated crime. Information gathered by the system is analyzed and used for investigative and intelligence purposes, as well as public awareness, to help combat future financial exploitation.

Financial institutions are uniquely positioned to help prevent financial loss due to offering services and products helping consumers manage their finances. Banks and other financial institutions are already required to report suspected abuse to law enforcement, but many only report to their local police department or possibly adult protective services. Reporting to local authorities is essential, but additional reporting to federal agencies can provide investigative support to local agencies. The sooner the abuse is reported to federal authorities, the more likely the stolen funds will be recovered. Reporting within the first 24-48 hours is critical to intervening and recovering stolen money, especially through cyber scams.

AB 871 requires financial institutions to provide annual training on reporting suspected financial elder abuse that includes making reports to both local APS or law enforcement and the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). Expanding reports to federal authorities will improve coordination of resources, aid local law enforcement in their investigation and improve the chance to recover stolen funds.

In Contra Costa County, APS investigates approximately 3,300 cases annually. An average of 27% of these cases involve suspected financial abuse. Over the last six years, APS has responded to 2,362 allegations of improper use of funds, 1,556 allegations of theft, and 2,266 allegations of abuse by scam. Tragically, in many of these cases, the victims never recover their lost assets. The trend is worsening. In 2024, 29.9% of APS reports in Contra Costa County involved suspected financial abuse—an increase from 22.5% in 2020. With the county's senior population projected to grow substantially over the next 15 years, we can expect the number of financial abuse cases to increase as well.

While reporting from financial institutions has increased, gaps in knowledge remain. Improved training will help employees better recognize the red flags of abuse and better fulfill their mandated reporting responsibilities. Improved understanding will allow for more timely and comprehensive reporting significantly improving APS' ability to respond swiftly to reports of abuse and to coordinate with law enforcement and partner agencies. This proactive approach will enhance the protection of vulnerable adults in our community.

The passage of this bill would provide additional support in finding and stopping criminals, clarify for financial institutions about how to most effectively report abuse, and allow reports to be made quickly thus increasing the chance of recovering stolen funds.

Contra Costa County recognizes the need to provide additional training, resulting in an increase in prosecution of fraud and financial exploitation. For these reasons, Contra Costa County respectfully requests your support for AB 871.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Jami Morritt, Chief Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Marla Stuart, Employment and Human Services Department Director
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer

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Monica Nino
Clerk of the Board
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April 15, 2025

The Honorable Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 390
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1288 (Addis) Registered environmental health specialists – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Bonta:

As Chair of the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, I write to express our support for Assembly Bill 1288 (Addis), which would help expand the environmental health specialist workforce by extending the time in which local health/environmental health departments may train and employ a local Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) trainee from three years to five years.

In addition, AB 1288 was recently amended to include additional provisions to make it easier for people to become REHS trainees, allow them to successfully complete their trainee period, and allow more opportunities to take the certification test. Specifically, these provisions will redefine science degree requirements, opening the profession to a broader variety of college graduates with science and health care degrees. These additions will also increase the number of training topics local jurisdictions can cover to better prepare their trainees and lastly, amendments will update the composition of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee, making it easier for the department to conduct and administer the committee, including recruiting and retaining committee members.

Currently, certification for the REHS program is administered by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The program ensures that certified REHS' have met adequate education, training and experience requirements and have passed a comprehensive state examination. While working towards certification, individuals may be employed as a REHS trainee by local health/environmental health departments for up to three years. However, limited examination offerings and strict time limitations governing how often a trainee may take the exam have resulted in trainees being reassigned or released – even if they wish to continue to pursue a career as a certified REHS. The current state exam passage rate averages around 60 percent, covering a breadth of key technical topics.

REHSs play a critical role in safeguarding our communities. In Contra Costa County, residents and visitors are protected by REHS employed by Contra Costa Health (CCH) who work to

reduce the incidence of illness or injury for people throughout our communities. They do this by monitoring and enforcing a variety of state and local laws, ordinances, and regulations. This is usually accomplished through permitting and inspecting facilities subject to CCH oversight including, but not limited to:

- **Food Protection:** REHSs conduct surveillance of a wide range of food establishments to ensure day-to-day operations are done in a safe manner to prevent food-borne illness.
- **Recreational Health:** REHSs monitor the construction and operation of all public pools and spas to prevent injury or illness from unsafe or unsanitary conditions.
- **Drinking Water:** REHSs oversee Small Public Water Systems, well construction and destruction, water haulers, to ensure drinking water is safe for public consumption.
- **Solid Waste:** REHSs ensure that once waste is collected at the curbside, it is properly handled at landfills, transfer stations, compost facilities, and recycling facilities.

REHSs were also key to Contra Costa County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic helping to set-up and staff clinics for testing and vaccines, perform public outreach, and conduct complaint investigations in addition to their day-to-day duties mentioned above. Local REHSs have also been deployed during the clean-up phase of some of our state's most devastating wildfires to help their counterparts rebuild their communities. The critical role REHSs play in safeguarding everyday life has cemented Contra Costa County's need to ensure a strong and robust REHS workforce to provide essential services to our communities.

Contra Costa County is optimistic that AB 1288 will help address some of the recruitment and retention challenges we are currently experiencing. For example, Contra Costa Health has faced significant challenges recruiting and hiring REHS candidates. Most potential REHS candidates are employed with other agencies, making it difficult for CCH to recruit these candidates and have them accept employment in the County. CCH would greatly benefit from having the ability to recruit and employ REHS trainees for a longer period of time to ensure that important regulatory programs are staffed to protect the public health of our community.

AB 1288 will assist CCH to strengthen and sustain our REHS workforce pipeline with a simple extension of the time needed to pass the REHS exam. While this provision will not solve some of the larger issues all jurisdictions face, it will expand opportunities for entry-level employees to continue their careers with local health and environmental health departments. For these reasons, Contra Costa County respectfully requests your support for AB 1288.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Health Committee
Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Dr. Ori Tzvieli, Health Officer, Public Health Director, & Interim Director of Contra Costa Health Services
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer

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Clerk of the Board
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May 8, 2025

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1383 (McKinnor) – Public employees' retirement benefits –
As Revised April 23, 2025

Dear Chair Wicks:

On behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully express our opposition to AB 1383, authored by Assembly Member McKinnor. This bill proposes significant changes to public employee retirement benefits—specifically increasing benefits for public safety employees—which would substantially raise pension liabilities for public agencies.

The Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA), implemented in 2013, was a critical step toward ensuring long-term sustainability of public pension systems. It provided much-needed tools for local governments to manage rising pension costs and help protect public retirement systems, including the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) and 1937 Act systems like the Contra Costa County Employees' Retirement Association (CCCERA) from potential insolvency. AB 1383 would undermine many of the key reforms enacted through PEPRA, reversing progress made over the last decade.

While we appreciate the bill's intent to support recruitment and retention of public safety professionals, the proposed approach places increased financial burdens on local governments without providing the resources to offset those costs. These proposed changes are not only costly but would apply exclusively to safety employees, creating inequities within the public workforce. The bill lacks critical actuarial analysis for local governments, especially '37 Act counties like ours, to fully understand its fiscal impact. Like many other public agencies, Contra Costa continues to navigate fiscal uncertainty at the federal, state, and local levels. Revenues are not keeping pace with rising service demands, and unfunded mandates such as this one only deepen the strain on essential services.

Though AB 1383 applies prospectively, it would still have immediate fiscal consequences. Local agencies—including ours—have adjusted compensation in good faith under existing PEPRA assumptions. The changes proposed in AB 1383 would disrupt budget planning and likely reduce future salary increases to accommodate higher benefit costs, undermining the very recruitment

and retention goals the bill seeks to address. Our County has actively pursued innovative strategies to strengthen our workforce, and we would welcome additional state support for those efforts.

Contra Costa County remains committed to providing fair and competitive benefits for our employees, while safeguarding the long-term fiscal health of our local government. Sustainable pension reform must be equitable, financially responsible, and protect core public services. In contrast, AB 1383 threatens to exacerbate budgetary pressures, widen disparities between safety and non-safety employee benefit tiers, and create long-term financial instability for public agencies. For these reasons, Contra Costa County respectfully opposes AB 1383.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Jami Morritt, Chief Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer

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Monica Nino
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May 6, 2025

The Honorable Catherine Blakespear
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7720
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 16 (Blakespear) – Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention program: housing element: unsheltered and chronic homelessness: assessment and financing plan – REMOVE OPPOSITION – As Amended April 24, 2025

Dear Senator Blakespear:

On behalf of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, I write to inform you that we are removing our opposition to Senate Bill 16. We appreciate your efforts to modify this bill to remove the unfunded mandate on counties to fund 50% of the cost of city-operated homeless shelters. Strengthening the state's homelessness response system is one of Contra Costa County's top priorities. These amendments will help address homelessness without unraveling existing efforts to provide comprehensive services and housing for the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our county supports the creation of a comprehensive homelessness response system that has defined roles for counties, cities, and the state, and that would provide sufficient, ongoing funding to accomplish those defined responsibilities. The Contra Costa County Continuum of Care (CoC) unites over 50 organizations, cities, towns and individuals with a shared mission to prevent and end homelessness in Contra Costa County. Our CoC has worked collaboratively with cities and local partners to address the homelessness crisis, engaging in a planning process to develop a comprehensive regional homelessness action plan, reflecting mutual agreement on how to address homelessness in our region. Together, we have made collaborative decisions to address all aspects of homelessness response, including connecting individuals to health and human services, prevention efforts, conducting street outreach, supporting shelters, and operating permanent supportive housing. The CoC's plan was submitted jointly as part of the application for Round 5 of the Homeless Housing, Accountability and Prevention (HHAP) program and was approved by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Addressing homelessness in our state requires a coordinated effort and significant resources, including permanent housing and social, health, and behavioral health services. These priorities are consistent with the State priorities outlined in Rounds 5 and 6 of the HHAP program, and reflect a policy decision of the Governor and Legislature to prioritize utilizing funds for permanent housing before new interim housing.

Resources are necessary to address these unmet needs. Current funding is insufficient, driving counties like Contra Costa towards having to self-fund many critical services. Since the enactment of our own local sales tax in 2021, Contra Costa has invested an additional \$40.7 million in discretionary sales tax dollars to support efforts to build permanent supportive housing and affordable housing. This past summer, our County opened a new 54-bed permanent supportive housing complex in San Pablo. Permanent supportive housing has a 90% success rate in avoiding a return to homelessness, contributing to the State's prioritization of these efforts. Continued collaboration through clear roles and processes, along with funding to effectuate these policies are key to making progress on long-term, evidence-based solutions to homelessness.

We appreciate your leadership and willingness to engage on this issue. Contra Costa County is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the state in finding solutions to enhance accountability and better serve unhoused individuals throughout our county and state.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN
Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Jami Morritt, Chief Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Members, Senate Housing Committee
Alison Hughes, Chief Consultant, Senate Housing Committee
Kerry Yoshida, Policy Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Misa Lennox, Consultant, Office of the Senate President pro Tempore
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer

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Monica Nino
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May 9, 2025

The Honorable Senator Arreguín
Chair, Assembly Public Safety
1020 N Street, Room 545
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 357 (Menjivar) Juveniles: delinquency. – OPPOSE – *As Amended April 10, 2025*

Dear Chair Arreguín:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of Contra Costa County, I write to inform you of our opposition to SB 357, which seeks to authorize the board of supervisors of a county with at least 3.5 million people to delegate to another county department all or part of the duties and authorities concerning minors that are statutorily imparted to probation departments or probation officers. While this bill was amended to effectively only apply to Los Angeles County, it sets a concerning precedent throughout the state.

County probation has long been a cornerstone of the juvenile justice system, a system which serves both juveniles (ages 12-17) and emerging adults (ages 18-24) adjudicated for offenses ranging from minor misdemeanors to serious and violent felonies. The success of the juvenile system is dependent upon the roles and responsibilities played by probation. Overseeing the entirety of the continuum provides probation a unique position to recognize the importance of working with youth in the prevention, intervention and deflection stages. That work, combined with training and research-based approaches, allows probation to support and foster the utilization of interventions on the front end of the continuum where safe and appropriate to be supported in the community, thereby reserving detention for those youth who pose a public safety risk. When necessary, an order into detention must be handled by trained experts in both rehabilitative and safety concepts. Probation serves the youth, families, the community, the county and ultimately the court to balance the needs of safely housing youth while working towards a rehabilitation plan developed specifically for their individual needs.

Our Probation Department has extensive training and experience in evidence-based approaches to working with youth, young adults, adults and we are deeply concerned not only about the potential impacts of this bill on community safety, service coordination at the county level, coordination with the courts, and the justice system's ability to function effectively, but also about similar impacts to recipient departments and the constituencies they serve.

The bill raises many questions and will have impacts on community safety, local coordination among entities, training requirements, fiscal impacts, and the local implementation of state policies and requirements governing the juvenile justice system.

Redirecting these responsibilities would impact and disrupt local service continuity, create public safety risks, and negatively impact the community safety services to balance safety and treatment for youth and adults.

For these reasons, Contra Costa County respectfully opposes SB 357.

Sincerely,



CANDACE ANDERSEN

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
Honorable Members, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
Stephanie Jordan, Counsel, Senate Public Safety Committee
Monica Nino, County Administrator
Esa Ehmen-Krause, Chief Probation Officer
Michelle Rubalcava & Geoff Neill, Nielsen Merksamer